

The Baptist CHALLENGE

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Why Baptists Cannot Enter An Ecumenical Movement

Though the last two or three decades, special emphasis has been placed on the need of uniting the various religious faiths of the world into one body. A number of years before this, meetings were held with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, but the Roman church gave its answer in unmistakable terms, "unconditional surrender." Thus, from that

time, the efforts of those who were directing this movement of unification were turned toward the Protestant bodies. Its one major purpose was to unite all the various Protestant denominations into one group, obliterating all denominational lines, and

By Foy M. Moser

bringing all people to the acceptance of one faith. In the last few years this group has gained considerable power through its appeal to the flesh, and has practically gathered unto itself most of the free religious broadcasting time that it might better place its campaign

before the public.

During the war when sons were dying on the battlefields and were being ministered unto by chaplains of various denominations, this was capitalized upon as a reason for the uniting of all faiths, inasmuch as the returning service men would not be so interested in the doctrines of the

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The Origin of Sin

By B. H. Carroll

Now we come to the origin of sin. From the most ancient times the origin of evil has baffled the inquisition of proud human philosophy. The Bible account of it is both simple and satisfactory. It originated with the angels. These angels were created free, moral agents, under law, on probation, with

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U.S. Protestant Population Seen Losing Majority Status

By Joyce Howard Price

The United States will lose its historic status as a majority-Protestant nation as early as this year, according to a national survey released yesterday. Between 1993 and 2002, the proportion of Americans who said they were Protestants fell from 63 percent to 52 percent after decades of stability, according to the study released by the National

Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. "Since Colonial times, the United States has been a Protestant nation. But this year or next, the proportion of all Protestants will fall below 50 percent" of the total U.S. population for the first time, said Tom Smith, director of NORC's General Social Survey,

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Service For Christ

By C. M. Lewallen

"Whatsoever he saith unto you do it ..." (Jn. 2:5).

These are the words of Jesus' mother which were spoken to the servants at the wedding feast in Cana. Their service was performed for Christ. Today the Lord is calling for servants to do His bidding for service. We study this

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Quiz The Pastor -- #31

Is It Wrong To Buy On Credit?

By the late Nick Michalinos

Question: Since the Bible says we are to "owe no man anything," is it wrong to buy on credit?

Answer: There is a verse that states, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. 13:8). This is probably the verse you are referring to. No, I don't believe the Bible is against credit as such, but this needs clarification. The Christian is not only obligated to pay taxes (Rom. 13:6-7), but to also pay his bills as Romans 13:8 plainly tells us.

When I purchase something on credit and agree to pay the monthly payments or to pay the complete debt off on a certain date when it is due, it is then at the due date that I legally owe for my debt and I should pay as agreed or else I commit sin. It is wrong to have money due and not to pay it. Most of us have to purchase our

homes, automobiles, etc., on a monthly payment basis because a full cash once for all payment would be out of the question for us for these expensive items. It is not therefore wrong, as I see it, to purchase certain things on the installment plan as agreed upon by the seller and buyer. I don't believe Romans 13:8 is condemning such a transaction, but it is a warning against those who create a debt and at that time in their hearts know they are unable to meet their monthly obligations. This verse should be a blinking red-light to get God's people out of the bad habit of over-spending and contracting out of reach debts, and to regulate their lives to a more frugal, economical manner of life. God has promised to meet our "need" but not our greed (Phil. 4:19).

Christians and churches

should have a good, unblemished reputation of paying our debts when due. Most of us have felt the "sting" of loaning our hard earned money to some hurting individual who, with eyes full with tears of gratitude, promises to pay it back without fail when he gets his next pay check. Scores of pay checks have come and gone but the debt remains. In some cases the borrower may even become angry with the lender at the very thought he would want his money repaid to him! Our text in Romans 13:8 condemns such actions.

The rest of this verse says that "Love" for "one another" would keep us from owing "no man anything." "Love" will keep me from trying to beat my debts. Why would I want to wrong you if I have love for you? Of course, we all agree, the little plastic charge cards makes shopping and running up debts an easy matter, but the debt paying due date comes around too quickly for some folks and we cannot pay for this shopping madness.

We need to realize that if we can't afford a big house payment, then live in a more affordable house. We don't really need big,



expensive new cars, or the finest clothes, or eat out in the best restaurants. We need to change our views and attitudes and to regulate our lives to match our income. Romans 13:8 is designed to guide us in this direction.

The way of life for some folks is to get financially rescued from their chronic indebtedness by someone else's money; money which has been saved by the rescuer because they were willing to do without some things in life.

Some have met with job loss or long time illness or long lasting injuries due to accidents, or such like, and the money is not there to pay the bills. The proper thing to do is to contact the lender or mortgage company, etc., and explain our situation and seek some sort of pay back that will be at the level of our present low income. Others in this type of financial problem will declare bankruptcy or Chapter 11. Whatever our money problems may be, the end result should be that we "owe no man anything." □

THE BAPTIST CHALLENGE

M. L. Moser, Editor
 Pastor Emeritus
 CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH
 15601 Taylor Loop Rd.
 Little Rock, Arkansas 72223
 Church Phone: (501) 868-7703
 Email: mlmoser1@juno.com
 Editor's Phone: (501) 258-3221

Message #9 – March 4, 1979

The Keys of Death & Hell

By M. L. Moser, Editor

“And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” (Rev. 1:17-18).

In these verses we find the reaction that occurred to John when he turned to see the voice that spake unto him. He not only saw these seven golden candlesticks, but he saw the Son of man, the Lord Jesus Christ in all of His glory. As he saw the Lord in all of His glory, that vision completely overpowered him. So much so that it says: “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead” (Rev. 1:17).

As you read through the Old Testament and see where other men had the opportunity to view the Lord, we find they had a similar experience. In the Book of Isaiah we see the reaction of one man as he sees the Lord in His glory. As Isaiah writes concerning this experience, he says, “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the

temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isa. 6:1-5).

As the prophet Isaiah sees this vision of the Lord in glory, it made him aware of just how much difference there was between him and his God. He saw the holiness and the righteousness of God, and it made him recognize as nothing else could, his own unholiness and his own unrighteousness. His response was “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips.” There was a respect; there was an awe; there was a since of reverence as he realized that there he was in the very presence of

God, and to be in the presence of God made him aware of his own unworthiness.

Joshua also had an encounter with the Lord, whereby he also was in the presence of the Lord. Joshua says: “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant?” (Josh. 5:13-14). So Joshua had a like experience as did Isaiah, for when he realized that he was in the presence of the Lord, the Captain of the hosts of the Lord, he fell down upon his knees and worshiped Him, for he realized he was in the presence of deity.

In the Book of Job, notice the response of Job when he recognized that he was in the presence of the Lord. “Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou



canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes” (Job 42:1-5). As Job sees the Lord, and as he recognizes that he is in the very presence of the Lord Himself, the result is: “Wherefore, I abhor myself” that is, I hate myself, and I repent in dust and ashes. No wonder then that when John turned suddenly and as he looked and saw amid those seven candlesticks, and as he saw the Son of man, he said “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.”

Habakkuk describes that experience about as well as anyone can. Habakkuk describes his physical sensation and his physical feelings as he saw himself in the presence of the Lord. He said: “When

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Martin Van Buren

On March 4, 1837, Martin Van Buren said early in his inaugural address:

"So sensibly, fellow-citizens, do these circumstances press themselves upon me that I should not dare to enter upon my path of duty did I not look for the generous aid of those who will be associated with me in the various and coordinate branches of the Government; did I not repose with unwavering reliance on the patriotism, the intelligence, and the kindness of a people who never yet deserted a public

God In Our Government

servant honestly laboring in their cause; and, above all, did I not permit myself humbly to hope for the sustaining support of an ever-watchful and beneficent Providence."

He concluded with this statement:

"... I only look to the gracious protection of the Divine Being whose strengthening support I humbly solicit, and whom I fervently pray to look down upon us all. May it be among the dispensations of His providence to bless our beloved country with honors and with length of days." □ □

STATUS . . .

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which measures public trends.

The NORC survey identifies Protestants as "any post-Reformation Christian denomination," including some groups, such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and Jehovah's

Witnesses, although their theologies differ substantially from those of most Christians and they are not universally viewed as Protestant.

While the United States "has been seen as white and Protestant, we're not going to be majority Protestant any longer," added Mr. Smith, co-author of the study titled "The

Vanishing Protestant Majority."

Mainline Protestant churches, such as United Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal, have been losing members for years, but those losses have been cushioned by gains in the number of people joining evangelical or fundamentalist denominations. "Some evangelical faiths are growing, while none of the major liberal Protestant denominations are," Mr. Smith said. "But with the exception of Southern Baptists," the largest Protestant denomination with more than 16 million members, he said, "most evangelical denominations are quite small," so any gains they have made in members have not increased the total number of Protestants in the United States today.

Key factors in the decline of Protestantism are as follows, according to the NORC report:

- The number of Americans who said they had no religion rose from 9 percent in 1993 to 14 percent in 2002. Many in this group were former Protestants.

- Americans who said they belonged to religions other than Christianity or Judaism rose from 3 percent to 7 percent between 1993 and 2002. Other religions included Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Buddhism and other Eastern faiths, and those who describe themselves

as inter-denominational.

- Large numbers of young people and adults have been leaving Protestant denominations, as the number of non-Protestant immigrants increased, making up a greater share of the population.

- A lower percentage of U.S. residents are being raised as Protestants. Surveys indicate that 55 percent of U.S. adults today were raised as Protestants. But in the early 1980s, 67 percent to 68 percent of U.S. adults were raised in Protestant households.

- Fewer U.S. Protestants are maintaining their faith as adults. In the 1970s through 1993, Protestant denominations enjoyed a retention rate of 90 percent or more. But since then, retention has remained in the 80 percent range. A growing number of Americans who have become inactive in Protestant denominations are describing themselves as Christians, rather than Protestants. "About 2 percent of Americans today are what we call generic Christians. That's up from less than 1/2 percent who described themselves that way" a decade ago, Mr. Smith said.

NORC is not the only national research or polling organization whose data indicate Protestantism is

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God's Master Piece -- The Human Body -- Message #19

VITAMINS

By Arthur I. Brown

In addition to proteins, fat, carbohydrates, water, and mineral materials, man's food must contain still other substances known as vitamins. These are indispensable to life. The Latin word for life is "vita," hence the word vitamins. They are formed by plants or animals, and the body must have minute quantities so that the life processes may be carried out. If vitamins are absent, the other foods cannot be utilized. Various diseases result if the supply is insufficient, for example, rickets and scurvy. At least eight vitamins are definitely known and it is quite likely others will be discovered. These are vitamin A; the vitamin B complex, containing B1, nicotinic acid, and riboflavin; and vitamins C, D, E, and K.

Vitamin A is a yellow-red pigment found largely in carrots, and so has received the name, carotene. It is formed in plants through the action of sunlight and enters the body via the digestive system in green plants, such as spinach, lettuce, and cucumbers, and in colored fruits and vegetables, such as tomatoes, carrots, and berries.

This carotene is absorbed from the intestine into the liver, where it receives the finishing touches converting it into perfect vitamin A. From the liver it is distributed in the blood stream to all parts of the body. If you ask what this strange member of the vitamins does, the exact answer is not known. It seems to be necessary to the proper functioning of the eye in adapting itself to good vision in the dark. The background of the eye, the retina, which is the spread-out optic nerve coming from the brain, contains a reddish substance known as visual purple. When light strikes the retina, the visual purple is bleached and loses its color. In darkness, the pigment reforms, and it seems as if this sensitizing chemical enables the eye to see better in a dim light. A disturbance in the regeneration of visual purple results in night blindness.

Besides the plant foods mentioned just now as containing carotene, it is found also in milk, butter, eggs, and liver, especially fish liver. The livers of cod and halibut are particularly rich in this substance. For instance, cod-liver oil contains five times as much

vitamin A as the best, fresh liver of a land animal, and ten times as much as the best butter.

Vitamin B is more widely distributed than any of the other forms, being present in all natural foods. Brewer's yeast has an abundance of vitamin B which is a member of a large group of substances known as the vitamin B complex, containing the three forms already mentioned. Vitamin B1 is essential to normal metabolism and is found in lower forms of plant and animal life. It is present in considerable quantities in wheat, rice, peas, beans, lentils, whole wheat bread and in rye bread, but not in white bread. It is lost in the process of grinding and refining the flour. Animals, fed exclusively on white wheat flour, die after twelve to forty days.

Lack of this vitamin B1 disturbs the metabolism of the body, and causes inflammation in the nerves, degeneration of the entire nervous system, accumulation of body fluid in the tissues and body cavities, and enlargement of the heart, leading eventually to heart failure and sudden death.

Vitamin C is an acid called ascorbic acid, the name indicating its power to prevent scurvy. All actively growing parts of the higher plants, — roots, stems, buds, and pods, as well as all fresh green leaves, contain vitamin C. If the body lacks this vitamin, the blood vessels become brittle and bleed easily, especially those in the gums, resistance to bacterial infection is lowered, and inflammations of the breathing passages develop.

Vitamin C is found in rose hips, paprika, pine needles, sauer kraut, and in citrus fruits, such as lemons, oranges and grapefruit. It is found also abundantly in parsley, radishes, tomatoes, blood, liver, and fresh meat.

Vitamin D is found in small quantities in the human body and is formed in a curious way. The skin contains a fat known as cholesterol in close association with another compound known as ergosterol, the latter being the inactive form of vitamin D which, by the absorption of certain ultra-violet radiations from the sun, is

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REVELATION . . .

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I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble: when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops" (Hab. 3:16). Notice how he describes this fear when he felt himself in the presence of God. He said his belly trembled within him. Have you suddenly had a fear come over you and you felt a sinking sensation right in the pit of your stomach? This was the sensation that Habakkuk said that he felt. "My lips quivered at the voice." He said "rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself." This is the same experience that occurred to John as he turned and saw that he was in the very presence of God. He said when I saw Him, "I fell at his feet as dead." May I say to you, that when these men of God saw that they were in the presence of God, that it caused them to fall upon their knees before Him in reverence, awe, and respect. Read of the experiences of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Gideon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Peter, and finally here, the Apostle John, and all of these had a like experience when they recognized that they were in the presence

of God. The reason is that they knew that God was a holy, a righteous God that was worthy of all the worship they could give; that He was worthy all of their respect and reverence they could bestow upon Him. No wonder that the Lord gives His commandment to the children of Israel and says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," for He is a holy, and a righteous God, and we ought to give reverence and respect unto Him. But do we?

We are living in a generation today where there is really no respect for God at all. People today have no qualms about taking God's name in vain, using His name in cursing, in blasphemy and in swearing. There is no reverence. There is no respect for God today. We have a group of people today called "Jesus People," some are even here in Little Rock. They have no respect and no reverence for God. I don't know if they still operate this place, but they used to have a place on West Roosevelt Street here in Little Rock, and it was called a coffee house. It was called "JC's Place." That's the name that they used, and when they were referring to "JC's" they meant Jesus Christ. No reverence; no respect. Though the Lord Himself does refer to us as brothers, and though He is our elder brother, yet we

should never try to bring Him down to the level of just a common everyday "brother" and call Him "Buddy, Buddy" and try to act "buddy, buddy." We must remember that Jesus Christ is God and we ought to give Him all of the worship, honor, and the respect that is due unto the Lord.

I want to say one more thing relative to this. I have heard Christians tell a joke that I thought was very much out of place. I cannot remember all of it, but it is a joke they picked up from the "Jesus People" I think, but it makes mockery and makes fun of the Trinity. The only thing I can remember is that they said something about the Father, something about the Son, and what I remember is, they said the "Holy Spook." This is not a joke. We're talking about God. To bring the name of God, or to bring the Trinity down to the level where you make a joke of it is blasphemy. This is what God is talking about when He says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." He is a holy God; He is a righteous God, and we ought to reverence Him and respect Him and never make a joke about Him.

When John turned and saw that He was in the presence of Deity, he says: "I fell at his feet as dead." But the Lord turned and spoke to him and put His right hand upon him to raise him up (Dan. 8:18). "And

he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not" (1:17; Mt. 14:27; Mk. 6:50; Ex. 33:20). It is natural for man to fear in the presence of Deity. However, the Christian need never fear, for he is eternally safe. If John, who knew Him intimately, was affected that way, what will be the effect on those who know Him not?

What words of comfort was this. Really, John should not have feared because he knew the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior. But can you imagine the shock when he turned and saw the Lord in all of His holiness, in all of His righteousness, in all of His perfection. It was an automatic thing for him to see his own unworthiness and his own unrighteousness and he fell before Him in fear because here he was a sinner in the very presence of God Himself. But the Lord says, "Fear not." How many times did we hear the Lord speak to His disciples while He was here upon the earth and say to them, "Fear not little children, fear not." When we know the Lord, we need not fear at all.

The Lord then identifies Himself so that John might know exactly who He is. He says, and was dead; and, "Fear not; I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Isa.

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BODY . . .

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transformed into vitamin D.

It seems to control the calcium metabolism of the body and is necessary for the formation of bone. Consequently, its absence results in rickets, which is accompanied by softening of the bony parts because of the lessened quantity of calcium and phosphorus. As is generally known, the codfish stores large quantities in its liver, but other forms of fish also have high vitamin D content in the liver, as mackerel, herring, and sprats. It is found, too, in egg yolk, butter, and animal livers.

Let me sum up briefly what is known about these mysterious compounds. Unless present in the diet, normal growth does not occur. They are required in such infinitesimal quantities that they cannot possibly be significant as sources of energy or as building stones for protoplasm. In some cases less than a thousandth of a gram eaten daily makes all the difference between health and disease. At present we can only guess why they are indispensable. In some mysterious way they are essential to life processes, especially the reactions involved in the growth of cells and tissues.

The many and conclusive discoveries, and the demonstrated serious consequences of vitamin deficiencies in man and

animals, have quite legitimately attracted public attention. Vendors of standard foods, as well as purveyors of real and pseudo vitamin preparations have, through advertising, helped to make people "vitamin conscious." So we radiate the cow and the hen to secure milk and eggs slightly richer in vitamin D. We add, or claim to add, vitamins to lipstick, chewing gum, cough drops, and even to beer, supposedly for the protection of our health.

We are advised through various publicity avenues to seek our vitamin salvation over the drug store counter, rather than put our trust in the common and simple grocery store products. There are a few salient facts we ought not to forget: (1) the various vitamin deficiency diseases are largely "man-made," that is, they are the consequences of refinement, cooking and preserving the natural foods, and of one-sided or unbalanced dietary habits; (2) that the vitamins are widely distributed in most of the natural foods in amounts seemingly sufficient for the health of man and animals. Therefore, it is preferable to watch your diet rather than to buy your vitamins in capsule or tablet forms.

After this study on foods and vitamins, we are ready to consider how the food taken into the body is prepared for the cellular millions. Obviously these microscopic citizens of the

body are quite unable to handle a piece of bread or meat. These foods must be changed and transformed into infinitely small digested particles so that the cells have nothing to do but take them in.

If we never felt the sensation of hunger, we might endanger our lives by lack of nourishment. But when the blood finds itself without food supplies to carry to the clamoring cell population, we experience that familiar desire to eat. Apparently there is some wholly mysterious connection between hungry cells and the central nervous system, so that the cells can send some kind of a telegram along to Headquarters asking that the Boss take in some food. We can imagine them saying, "Make him hungry!" In any case, something happens and we desire food; any kind will do if we are really hungry. The taste buds are waiting to give us the pleasurable sensation which would not be possible if God had not so thoughtfully placed them in our mouths.

I shall follow this amazing digestive process in the next article, but now I am thinking of another kind of food needed by our spiritual body. It is even more important than nourishment for the physical part of us. For the latter, bread is one of the chief foods; and I am sure you recall what the Lord said about bread from heaven as

recorded in John's Gospel, the 6th chapter, beginning at verse 27:

"Labor not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you ... They said ... unto Him, What must we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them. This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent ... My Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world. They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst ... him that cometh to me I shall in no wise cast out ... For this is the will of my Father, that everyone that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day ... Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this

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Track Star Puts Unplanned Pregnancy Ahead of Summer Games. — Word of her pregnancy came as both good and bad news for British track star Tasha Danvers-Smith. On the one hand she was overjoyed at the news of the new life inside of her. On the other, her hopes for a gold medal in the 400-meter hurdles at this summer's Olympics in Athens, Greece, were over. "I cannot lie; I considered an abortion," Danvers-Smith said, who married her coach last year and is now ten weeks pregnant. "But," she said, "this line from the Scriptures kept coming into my head: 'For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' For me, the whole wide world was the Olympics. At the same time, I felt I would be losing my soul. It just wouldn't fit well." (Source: London Telegraph, 5/13/04).

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Fulfillment of Prophecy? — About 10 years ago, a national program was launched in the U.S. that encourages owners to implant radio chips in their

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pets. Recently, an initiative to chip livestock coming into the country has been discussed as part of a reaction to the threat from mad cow disease. And two weeks ago, Mexico's Attorney General Rafael Maced la Concha, along with 160 of his employees, was implanted with a radio frequency identification (RFID) device from the VeriChip company in Palm Beach, Florida.

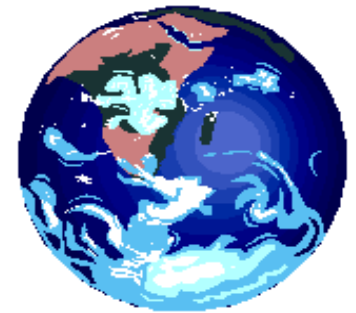
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Radical New Translation Makes Bible Accessible To Unchurched. — "A radical translation of the New Testament released with the personal backing of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and aimed at the those disillusioned with institutional religion, has been met by the mainstream media with a focus on a small number of biblical passages that relate to sexual ethics." The Good as New Version was translated by a former Baptist minister and has been praised by the Church of England's archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams. Williams says this version is different from others in that it has taken out "the stale, the technical, the unconsciously exclusive words and policies". The Good as New shows absolutely no reverence for the Words of God as shown

in these examples: Mark 1:4 "John did baptise in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." King James Bible. The Good as New Version reads: "John, nicknamed 'The Dipper', was 'The Voice'. He was in the desert, inviting people to be dipped, to show they were determined to change their ways and wanted to be forgiven." Mark 1:10-11 "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him. And there came a voice from the heaven saying, Thou are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (KJV). The Good as New Version says: "As he was climbing up the bank again, the sun shone through a gap in the clouds. At the same time a pigeon flew down and perched on him. Jesus took this as a sign that God's spirit was with him. A voice from overhead was heard saying, 'That's my boy! You're doing fine!'"

* * *

Administration Files Appeal in Partial Birth Abortion Case — The Bush administration is going back to court to defend the partial birth abortion ban that Congress passed last year. In June, a federal judge in San Francisco declared that the federal



ban on partial birth abortion was unconstitutional; but on Monday, the Justice Department appealed that ruling. Judge Phyllis Hamilton sided with Planned Parenthood in its lawsuit against the federal government, ruling on June 1 that the federal law barring partial birth abortion could not be enforced. Congress passed the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act in October 2003, and President Bush signed it in November. The Planned Parenthood Federation of America and other pro-abortion groups immediately challenged the law. Judge Hamilton was the first to strike it down, and rulings are anticipated later this summer in two similar cases filed in New York and Nebraska. On Monday, Planned Parenthood blasted the Attorney General John Ashcroft for "squandering Americans' hard-earned tax dollars to fund his anti-choice crusade." "Planned Parenthood is fully prepared to go back to court to ensure that this dangerous abortion ban never harms American woman," said Planned Parenthood Presi-

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La Voz Del Desierto

El Rap La Música De La Rebeldía

Por Felix M. González Bulgarlá, Redactor

“Cercando andan los malos, cuando la vileza es exaltada entre los hijos de los hombres” (Salmo 12:8).

Ciertamente la vileza de los hombres (y mujeres), es exaltada hoy en día en la glorificación de las estrellas del rap y reggae. Los mercaderes de estos géneros musicales no les importa cuántos jóvenes conducen al vicio y a la corrupción, ya que trafican la vul-

garidad y la violencia, haciendo millones a costa de los jóvenes al arruinar sus vidas, de manera que dan “... los niños por una ramera, y vendieron las niñas por vino para beber” (Joel 3:3). Examinemos pues la fiebre actual de la música rap la cual está haciendo mucho más daño que la música rock.

El rap se caracteriza por un ritmo fuerte y vibrante, en la que su música y lírica, son una

“vana repetición” con una ruda mezcla de lenguaje indecente y jerga callejera; parece ser la razón de su gran popularidad (vease Mateo 6:7). Pero, ¿qué nos dice la Biblia acerca de esto? “Ninguna palabra corrompida salga de vuestra boca, sino la que sea buena para la necesaria edificación, a fin de dar gracia a los oyentes” (Efesios 4:29). El rap también constituye una rebelión contra las

normas sobre el modo de vestir, el arreglo personal y la moralidad sexual. No es extraño que se haya convertido en un estilo de vida.

Los elementos básicos de la venganza personal, codicia, sexo y violencia son los temas principales de la mayoría de la música rap. Esta música induce a una perversión moral tan severa, que en cuestión de

(Vea RAP en la pág. 10)

Cenaré Con Él, y Él Conmigo

Galo Rodríguez, Redactor

Imaginate Dios frente a tu casa, esperando que le abras y lo invites a pasar. Es como si te dijera: “He nacido en tu mundo en forma humana para que me puedas ver y te hagas amigo mío. ¡Increíble! Dios nos da la cara y desea ser amigo de nosotros, los hombres: de nosotros que sólo nos acordamos de su nombre cuando alguien nos atraviesa en el camino, o cuando el doctor nos dice que los resultados salieron

positivos. De nosotros que lo hemos excluido de todas aquellas partes importantes de nuestras vidas: trabajo, sexo, relaciones y que lo hemos arrinconado a una hora semanal en nuestras actividades: esa hora que pasamos en la iglesia para calmar la conciencia y mostrarle a nuestros hijos que en algo hay que creer.

Y todavía Él quiere ser amigo de nosotros. ¿Por qué Dios no se da por aludido frente a nuestros desprecios

y desiste de buscar nuestra amistad con tanto ahínco? No puede. Nos quiere mucho. Nos ama a cada uno de nosotros con nombre y apellido como si fuéramos la única persona para amar en el universo. Por medio de la Biblia nos dice: “Yo te he amado desde el principio. Te he llamado por tu nombre desde antes que nacieras y conozco tus problemas, tus desafíos y sus sueños. No puedo dejar de amarte porque esa es

mi manera de ser, además, te conozco en todos tus detalles, te acepto en toda tu individualidad. Quiero cuidarte, protegerte, dar sentido a tu vida. Quiero librarte de las fuerzas que hoy te oprimen y destrozan tu existencia, y quiero asegurarte que no existe persona o fuerza en la tierra, ni en el infierno, ni aún en las cuevas de un desierto, que te puedan

(Vea CENARE en la pág. 10)

RAP . . .
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meses escuchándola, un joven puede llegar a ser totalmente pervertido. Ha dejado de ser una música sugestiva para convertirse en música "pornográfica."

Fijese como describió un crítico un concierto de rap: "Los cantantes competían entre sí para ver quién pronunciaba las blasfemias y obscenidades más impactantes. ... Los hombres y las mujeres que bailaban semejaban tener actos sexuales en el escenario." Uno de los promotores del concierto dijo lo siguiente de una representación que recibió mucha publicidad: "De cada dos palabras que salen de su boca, una es obscena." Sin embargo, la música que se tocó esa noche se consideraba rap común.

En vista de la mala reputación que tiene la música rap, ¿quisiera un joven cristiano identificarse con un estilo de vida que incluso muchas personas del mundo consideran impropia y desordenada (Tito 2:6-8; Ira Tsalonicenses 5:22)? Es cierto que algunas canciones de rap no son tan malas, pero ¿sería sabio afiliarse a cualquier tipo de música que en su mayor

parte ofende las normas cristianas (Prov. 24:1-2, 19-20)? El hecho de que seamos cristianos no significa que somos immune a estos tipos de ataques que Satanás hace a través de su música. La Biblia dice en Gálatas 6:8 que: "... el que siembra para su carne, de la carne segará corrupción." Escuchar música carnal sólo puede tener un efecto negativo en nosotros (Romanos 8:5-8).

El profesor de música Joseph Stuessy dijo: "Cualquier tipo de música afecta nuestro estado de ánimo, nuestras emociones, actitudes y nuestro comportamiento. ... Cualquiera que diga: 'Puedo escuchar heavy metal o rap, sin que me afecte,' está muy equivocado. Lo único es que afecta a diferentes personas, a diferentes grados, y en diferentes maneras." Pero, quizá más significativo es este comentario de Bob Larson cantante rock convertido evangelista: "Una mente que ha estado invadida por la pornografía musical o lo largo de la semana no puede fácilmente ser remodelada con sólo unas pocas horas dedicada a la instrucción cristiana el domingo." Un proverbio pregunta: "¿Tomará el hombre fuego en su seno sin que sus vestidos

ardan" (Proverbios 6:27)?

C i e r t a m e n t e deberíamos comenzar comprobando cualquier composición de palabras o música con Filipenses 4:8 y hacer estas preguntas: "¿Es verdadera?, ¿es honesta?, ¿es justa?, ¿es pura?, ¿es amable?" ¿es de buen nombre? ¿es digno de alabanza?" Si no cumple con estas normas y no piensas acerca de lo que estás escuchando, entonces encontrarás que tu mente subconsciente está siendo lentamente envenenada por estas celebraciones de lujuria y maldad, no importa cuán buen cristiano pienses que eres.

Hacemos un llamado a nuestro niños y jóvenes para que no se contaminen con esta música. Y si ya han participado en alguna forma de ella, aún tienen tiempo de apartarse y entrar a participar de las preciosas bendiciones que tiene Cristo para nosotros (2da Corintios 7:1). □

CENARE . . .
(Viene de la pág. 9)

sacar del círculo de mi amor. Sólo tú tienes el poder de ignorarme y separarte de mí, o abrir la puerta y dejarme entrar."

Ya es hora que abras la puerta de tu corazón y dejar entrar a tu vida el amor que Él te ha venido ofreciendo con persistencia tan preciosa. Reconoce el hecho de que por haber vivido separado de Dios tu vida se ha ensuciado y

necesitas limpiarla. Acepta le necesidad que tiene todo hombre y mujer en despertarse y enfrentar sus pecados para buscar perdón

Es una verdad muy grande aquella que dice: "Todos han pecado y están destituidos de la gloria de Dios" (Romanos 3:23). Invoca a Jesús. Él ha prometido que a todo aquel que le busca, Él no lo echara afuera vacío. Él sólo espera que tú le llames para entrar a tu vida y rescatarte de tu camino extraviado e iluminarte con la verdad. La Biblia dice: "Cree en el Señor Jesucristo, y serás salvo, tú y tu casa" (Hechos 16:31). Deposita tu vida con todo sus problemas y faltas en Jesús. Acéptalo como tu Salvador. La Biblia enseña "Mas a todos los que le recibieron, a los que creen en su nombre, les dio potestad de ser hechos hijos de Dios (Juan 1:12) . □

Los Padres Necesitan Evaluar Los Libros de Sus Hijos

Un líder en pro del movimiento a favor de la familia le habló a un grupo de padres en Wilmington, Carolina del Norte, sobre un polémico libro titulado "Rey y Rey", disponible en la Biblioteca de una escuela primaria. El libro trata sobre un príncipe que desprecia muchas posibles princesas elegibles para casarse con él y en su lugar se enamora de un príncipe. La historia infantil termina con los dos hombres casándose y compartiendo un beso.

Iglesia Bautista El Redentor

Central Lafayette #17, Arroyo, PR 00714

(787) 839-3669 y (787) 839-5792

Marcos A. Curet, Pastor

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dent Gloria Feldt said in a statement. She called the partial birth abortion ban a "transparent act of hostility toward women's health, the right to medical privacy and the Supreme Court of the United States." Pro-life groups call the procedure — in which a full-term or nearly full-term baby is partially delivered and stabbed in the head — barbaric. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.), a board-certified surgeon, has called the procedure brutal, barbaric, and morally offensive. "It is outside of the mainstream practice of medicine," Frist said during Senate debate on the measure. "Contrary to the claims of its supporters, partial birth abortion is a fringe procedure," Frist said. Both sides expect the case to end up in the U.S. Supreme Court.

* * *

RIP Free Speech. — One of these years, a liberal will occupy the White House. Whether it is Kerry this time or a Kerry think-alike next time, that day is coming. And high on the liberal agenda will be an effort to reduce the influence of — or maybe outlaw — the religious right. The liberals will do it in the name of pluralism and nary a voice will be raised... — Paul M.

Weyrich.

* * *

UN Urged to Protect Muslims Who Change Religion. — Campaigners for religious freedom have urged the United Nations to act to protect "Muslims who choose to convert to another faith." A petition signed by almost 90,000 people in 32 countries was presented last week to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour, the organization spearheading the campaign said. The Barnabas Fund, a UK-based charity working among Christians in Islamic societies, said Muslims who change religions, often called "apostates," should be "free to do so without having to face a lifetime of fear as a result." Under Islamic (shari'a) law, Muslim men who decide to adopt another belief and refuse to return to Islam — usually within a limited period of time — may be put to death. It remains a contentious point in Islam, but countries where people have been accused or convicted of apostasy include Sudan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Mauritania. In 2002, a shari'a-based penal code was introduced in a Malaysian state controlled by an Islamist party. It said any Muslim who converted to another faith had three days to repent, failing which he faced having his property forfeited and being

sentenced to death. Although the Koran says "there is no compulsion in religion" (sura 2:256), the Islamic canonical tradition called the Hadith contains references to execution for apostasy, including one in which Mohammed commands, "Any [Muslim] person who has changed his religion, kill him"

* * *

Judge Orders Bible Removed From Monument at Texas Courthouse — A federal judge ruled that a Bible must be taken out of a monument outside a courthouse in Houston, Texas, within 10 days because the display violates the constitutional separation of church and state. U.S. District Judge Sim Lake ordered that Harris County officials must remove a King James Version Bible from a lighted glass display case in a four-foot-high stone monument outside the civil courts building, as well as pay \$41,000 in court costs and attorney fees. In his ruling, Lake stated that the county should exercise religious neutrality and "not be seen as endorsing Christianity." The court concludes that the purpose of the Bible display is to encourage people to read the Bible," Lake added. "What other purpose could there be for prominently displaying an open Bible in an illuminated case tilted toward passers-by in a heavily frequented

plaza in front of the main entrance to the courthouse?" Harris County representatives had responded that the monument was built with private funds in 1956 as an expression of free speech and a memorial to philanthropist William Mosher. Tuesday's decision came as the result of a lawsuit filed a year ago by real estate broker and attorney Kay Staley, who is a member of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State." It is just a wonderful day for religious freedom and religious diversity," said Staley, who stated that a similar battle over the Ten Commandments monument in Alabama inspired her to file the suit contending the display violates the First Amendment ban on establishment of religion. However, Harris County Judge Robert Eckels said he was disappointed with the ruling and will work with the county attorney to develop strategies for an appeal."I continue to believe that the monument as it stands today, with the Bible, is an appropriate memorial to William Mosher for his work ... and for the people of Houston and Harris County," Eckels said. The lawsuit has generated a "spirited" debate in the community. At one point, Staley told the Houston Chronicle that she had even received death threats

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441:4; 44:6; 48:12). What He tells him is "I am God." I am the self-existing One. I am the eternal One. I am the One that is the conqueror over death. He is alive never to die again (1 Jn. 1:1-2).

Now as John looked at this One, John remembered Him. It has now been over 50 years since He had seen Him face to face. As he turns, looks and sees the Lord, here is Jesus Christ, the same one, but now glorified in all of His glory. And John sees and recognizes that his faith in His resurrection has not been a delusion, that his faith had not been misplaced. Though Jesus had died and had been resurrected, and had ascended into heaven more than 50 years before this, yet John now sees that same Jesus glorified in heaven and he knows that his faith has not been in vain, that it is real. Though he has been absent from this One for better than 50 years, he realizes that this One that he has faithfully been serving all these years, is still alive. He knows that it is for this cause that he has now been exiled and isolated here upon the Isle of Patmos, that it is not all in vain. His Savior still lives. That very one that 50 years before he had worshiped while He was here in the flesh upon the earth, now he has the opportunity to see Him in

His glorified state, conqueror over death, speaking to him, touching him, laying His hand upon him, and saying "Fear not." What words of comfort and words of assurance that these were for John.

He also tells him. "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." He tells him that He has the keys of hell and death. That Jesus Christ appeared to John in all of His majesty and in all of His glory was a reason why John should not be afraid. And so John is calm and quiet and has no fear. He is ready to listen and to hear what the Lord tells him. And the Lord says: "I have the keys of hell and of death." He is the one who controls hell and death (Psa. 68:20).

Now as we draw this message to a close, this is what I want to speak about "The keys of hell and of death." Keys are for gates or doors, and the Bible speaks of many gates. When we study the 21st chapter of Revelation, we find that there are 12 gates to the heavenly Jerusalem. But there are other doors and gates that have keys to them as well.

In Psalm 24 we read a few verses about heaven. Heaven has a door, and we read about the entrance into heaven. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates: and be

ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory" (Psm. 24:7-10).

These verses describe the gate of heaven, and at the time of this opening, it is when Jesus Christ ascended into heaven. Here we have the reception as they open the gates of heaven and as He entered into heaven itself, and that is the gate that one day you and I will go through, if we know Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior.

But there are gates of hell as well. Jesus, speaking about the founding of His church, says: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Mt. 16:18). So there are "gates of hell."

Now there are two ways that lead out of this life. In the Gospel of Matthew we read: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few

there be that find it" (Mt. 7:13-14).

In Luke we read: "Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are" (Lk. 13:23-25). So we see that there are two ways leading out of this life. First, the gate that leads into heaven, that is the strait and narrow way. Then there are the gates (plural) that lead into hell. This is the broad way, and the Scripture says that there are few that enter into the strait gate, but many that enter into the broad ways, that enter into death.

Now what lies on the other side of the gates of death. Well, you're not the first person that ever wanted to know the answer to that question. When we turn to the book of Job we find that the question was raised by Job as well. The question is raised "Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?" (Job 38:17). The question is: Have you seen that which

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is beyond death's door? Do you know what is on the other side of the gates of death? Just what does lie on the other side of the gates of death? Heaven and Hell!

Hell is the Greek word "hades" meaning "the unseen state or unseen world" where the non-material part of man goes at death. Death refers to the death of the body, the material part of man. No man can die without permission from God Almighty (Jn. 5:21-29). No man can be raised from the dead without the same permission. Keys both open and lock doors. Doors permit some to enter and prevent others from entering. To hold the key to this was to hold the power over the invisible world. We need not fear to enter this world which He has entered and from which He has emerged triumphant. He has total power over the invisible or unseen world (Mt. 7:13; Lk. 13:24; Psa. 9:13; 24:7-9; 107:18).

Job didn't have any revelation then, and Job did not say for he didn't know. But we have a revelation that tells us what is on the other side of the gates of death. In the 16th chapter of the Gospel of Luke the Lord speaks to us concerning a rich man who died and went to hell, went through these gates of death. The Lord takes us

through the gates of death to the other side, into this invisible world, in order that we might know what is beyond the gates of death.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried" (Lk. 16:19-22)

Here the Lord takes us through the gates of death to let us know what is beyond the gates of death. "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they

which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Lk. 16:23-31).

Do you want to know what is on the other side of the gates of death, here it is. The Lord lets us see just a part of it, just a little bit of it. What is on the other side of the "gates of death" is hell. "And in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." What's on the other side of the gates of death? Hell!

Some of the most awful words in the English language are connected

with Hell. Words such as "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mk. 9:44), and "fire and brimstone" (Psm. 11:6). This is on the other side of the gates of death. This death refers to the death of the physical body. When you die, you're going to leave this world and go through one of these two gates, either that strait and narrow gate that leads to life everlasting, or that broad gate that leads to eternal hell.

Now here's a couple of things that can be taken by way of comfort. The Lord says that He has the keys of both death and hell. Keys speak of authority and power. That means that no man can die without the permission of God Almighty. But when God says it is time for you to die, no man will live beyond that day. No one will live beyond that time. He is sovereign over both spiritual and physical death. He has the keys of both hell and death. He's the one that controls the beat of your heart. He is the one that when He says it is time to die, you die, and then you go through the gate. If you're saved, you go through that gate that leads to life everlasting; if you're lost, you go through that gate that leads to an eternal hell.

Keys are used to both open and to lock doors, and doors permit some to enter and prevent others from

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subject with the help of four other Bible texts and see the method, the motive, the means, and the manner of service for Christ.

1. The Method of Service: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (Jas. 1:22). James is here admonishing believers to render true service for Christ. He is not calling on them to plan, imagine, see, or expect to do good and great things for the Lord; he is asking that they really perform the service. How often the preacher tells the congregation what they should do to better serve Jesus, points out to them the way of good service, makes them hear his words, but never sees any good fruit because his auditors are hearers and not doers. There is a lot of difference between a performer and a pretender. So many professors are dead instead of dynamic. What if Jesus had been only a hearer, and not a doer of God's will. There would be no hope for lost humanity, and all would have been lost.

2. The Motive of Service: "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). There is no room for selfish purposes in this text. Service for the glory of God will do for the good of mankind. What a joy to work when God's great and good name is being exalted. This motive should be

interwoven through all Christian service. It should dominate the activity of all believers. It should be the rule by which all conduct is measured. It should be the last word in any decision. When this is our motive for service, we will be giving true, faithful, and unselfish service to our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

3. The Means of Service: "Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). In Acts 3:16, we are told that Peter and John healed the lame man at the beautiful gate of the Temple in Jerusalem by using the name of Jesus and having faith in its power. The greatest name in all the world is JESUS. It is the Christian's power for accomplishing things for the church and God's cause. By means of His name and through faith in His name, we can worship acceptably, walk circum-

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entering. Though this rich man wanted Lazarus to come and help him, Abraham says there is a great gulf fixed. There's no leaving, there is no way, and what Jesus Christ is telling John when He says "I have the keys of hell and of death" is to say that He has total and complete power over the invisible world. This One that John sees and in whose presence

he is right now, is God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has total and complete power over the entire invisible world of death, hell and the grave, as well as heaven.

When we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, as John did, Jesus says to you and me, "Fear not." We do not need to fear Hell, because when Jesus came forth from the grave and was resurrected, His triumph assures us of our triumph. His triumphant resurrection is the certainty that we need not fear hell when we receive Him and trust Him as our personal Lord and Savior. Because He has total and complete power, we need have no fear at all, and he tells John "Fear not," and tells you and me, if we are saved, "fear not."

But for you that are not saved, for you that are unsaved, He does not tell you to "Fear not." In fact, He tells you the very contrary. He says fear not him that can only destroy the body, but He says you fear Him who can cast both soul and body into hell (Mt. 10:28).

Do you know the Lord? If you're saved, there should be no fear. If you're not saved, you may not fear Him, but you ought to because He has the keys of hell and of death. One of these days you're going to die, when the time is ready. He's going to turn the key and you're going to die, and if you're unsaved, then you're going

to go into eternal hell. Why? Because you did not trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and your Savior.

In summary let us understand this. Hell is the place of departed spirits, the invisible world. Death reigns in that world, but the Savior holds the key and can have access to that kingdom whenever He wishes. He releases all whom He wishes and confines all that He chooses. Since Christ always lives, He will always maintain that power.

So then as we read these words here they were words of comfort. To John, they were words that he was glad to hear. He felt the Lord put His hand upon him as it says, "And he laid his right hand upon me." That was a hand that was comforting to him. The Lord told him "Fear not." But one of these days the Lord is going to put His hand upon you, but it will be to cast you into outer darkness, into the lake of fire, where you will burn forever and ever. Why? Because you never trusted Him. You never repented of your sins and received Him as your Lord and Savior. Therefore you ought to fear Him, because He's not only able, but if you continue in unbelief, one day He will cast your soul and body into eternal fire, the lake of fire. It doesn't have to be that way. You can be saved now. Would you trust him? □

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over the matter. On the other side of the discussion, Steve Riggle, pastor of Houston's Grace Community Church, told Agape News that he feels the display is appropriate. "We just believe that we are one nation under God. Our history is clear. Christianity and the Bible and our nation are inseparably linked, whether people like it or not. Those are the facts — and we want it to stay that way," Riggle said. Riggle added that he believes most Americans "support the Ten Commandments being displayed; they support the Bible in the public square, and they support the acknowledging of God." The Texas pastor also hopes more believers will speak up for their rights. "It's incumbent upon all of us who are the majority to lift our voice in a cry of outrage at what's taking place today in the public square," he stated.

* * *

Same-Sex 'Marriage' Banned in Australia — Australian lawmakers Friday voted to ban same-sex marriage, following an emotional debate in the country's Senate. Members of minor parties opposing the bill called the day "Black Friday," slamming Prime Minister John Howard's conservative coalition for trying to rush

it through and criticizing the official opposition Labor Party for supporting the ban. Senator Bob Brown of the Green Party, a homosexual, accused Howard of "hatred" and following the "extreme right-wing fundamentalist currently in power in the United States." Australian Democrats leader Andrew Bartlett, another opponent of the bill, said there was no urgency to ban same-sex marriage. Government representatives said the matter was urgent because if lawmakers did not speedily ban same-sex marriage, the matter would be decided by the courts. Australian homosexuals who were "married" in Ontario are trying to have the courts declare their unions valid and legal in their home country. Earlier, the minor parties, which hold the balance of power in the Senate, tried to delay passage of the Marriage Amendment Bill by diverting it to a committee for further inquiry. They were furious when the Labor Party — which had agreed to the inquiry — subsequently agreed to support the government's ban. Brown accused Labor of a "cave-in" and later Friday moved an amendment that the bill's name be changed to the Marriage Discrimination Bill. That amendment failed, as did several others proposed by the Greens and Democrats designed to support marriage irrespective of the

gender of the couple. The bill passed Friday by a Senate vote of 39-7 will insert into the country's 43-year-old Marriage Act the words: "Marriage means the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life." Also to be inserted is a provision stating: "Certain unions are not marriages. A union solemnized in a foreign country between: (a) a man and another man; or (b) a woman and another woman; must not be recognized as a marriage in Australia." □

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spectly, work diligently, go faithfully, be blessed greatly, choose rightly, conquer easily. Faith has subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the

mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, made strength out of weakness, waxed valiant in fight and turned to flight the armies of aliens (Heb. 11:33-34).

4. The Manner of Service: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily" (Col. 3:23). This is the manner in which all service for the Lord should be done. It is the only acceptable way. God demands zealous, enthusiastic service; He is not pleased with lazy and indifferent work. His service demands all our energy — energy tempered with good judgment. Enter into His service with your whole heart, and He will bless you in the same way.

All Christian service should be performed heartily in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and to the glory of Almighty God.

The Tares Among the Wheat

The tare grows abundantly in the East. It is a kind of rye-grain having a broad-bladed leaf closely resembling the wheat amongst which it is generally found, and from which it can scarcely be distinguished in the early stages of growth. The only way farmers can readily identify the tare is when the harvest approaches. The wheat grows heavy and bends over, but the small-bearded

grain, arranged along the upper part of the stalk of the tares, stands perfectly erect.

At harvest time the farmer cuts the heads off the tare and gathers them in a pile and they are burned, then the wheat is gathered and put into the barn.

The taste of the tare is bitter, and eating even a small quantity produces

(See TARES on page 17)

Fundamental Baptist Information Service

By David W. Cloud

P. O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48106
fbns@wayoflife.org

Lutherans Ordain A Third Homosexual Pastor. — On July 25 Jay Wiesner became the third openly homosexual Lutheran pastor ordained in the Minneapolis area. He was ordained at Bethany Lutheran Church, the same church where he and his partner were "married" on May 1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America officially forbids homosexual ordinations, but that is largely on paper only. There are homosexual Lutheran pastors in Oakland, Sacramento, Hollywood, San Bernardino, Alameda, Berkeley, Kansas City, and other places.

* * *

California Supreme Court Invalidates Homosexual Marriages. — In a unanimous 7-0 decision the California Supreme Court has ruled that San Francisco Mayor Gavin exceeded his authority when he issued 4,000 marriage licenses to homosexual couples. In a separate 5-2 vote, the justices also determined that the licenses are null and void. The court did not rule on the broader issue of the constitutionality of homo-

sexual marriages, and there are cases making their way through the court system that will eventually force a decision on this question. It is important that we pray earnestly for the nation in obedience to 1 Timothy 2, in confidence that our prayers will change things by God's grace.

* * *

The Pagan Opening of the Olympic Games. — The opening ceremonies of the Olympic games in Athens featured pagan gods and goddesses. A half-man, half-horse centaur waded into the manmade lake in the center of the stadium and thrust a javelin skyward. A Cyclopic head emerged from the lake. Eros, the god of love, also made an appearance. The Olympian mascots are Phevos and Athena, the pagan gods of light and music. Last week we observed that the modern Olympic games are as pagan as they were when Zeus was the focus 2,000 years ago. When Emperor Theodosius banned the games in 393 because they were "too pagan," he was right. The human body is an amazing

creation capable of wonderful feats, but the Olympic games do not glorify a holy Creator.

* * *

Persecution Increasing In China. — The following is from Assist News Service, August 12: "The Voice of the Martyrs, an international Christian human rights watchdog, urged China yesterday to release over 100 house church leaders who it said were rounded up last week by security forces as part of an ongoing government-led crack down on evangelical Christians. Thousands of Chinese Christians are believed to be held in labor camps. Tough prison sentences were expected for the house church leaders who were arrested Friday, August 6, in Kaifeng City, Henan Province, reported the U.S.-based China Aid Organization (CAA), another Christian human rights group. They reportedly gathered for a meeting of encouragement at a gathering sponsored by a Henan House Church when suddenly '200 military police, Public Security Bureau and other officers' arrived at the scene 'in about 20 police and military vehicles along with six minibuses.' Several church leaders arrested earlier have been tortured and some have died while in police custody church officials, human rights watchdogs and media have said."

Muslims Murder More Christians. — Muslims have murdered at least four Christians in recent weeks. On June 30, Maulawi Assadullah's throat was cut in the Ghazni province of Afghanistan because he was "propagating Christianity." On July 19, Hani Betti, the Christian owner of Al-Hanna restaurant in Mosul, Iraq, was killed. The militants then cut off the hands and blinded the eyes of Betti's Muslim business partner. On July 17, Mrs. Helmy Tombiling was stabbed to death in Poso, Indonesia. On July 18, Islamic militants shot Susianty Tinuelele to death in the Central Sulawesi area of Indonesia. She was murdered in the Presbyterian Christian Church. Four teenagers were wounded in the same attack.

* * *

Pope Celebrates Anniversary of Dogma On Immaculate Conception. — On August 13 Pope John Paul celebrated the 150th anniversary of the dogma on Immaculate Conception with a visit to the Marian shrine in Lourdes, France. On December 8, 1854, Pope Pius IX declared "ex cathedra" (from the throne) that Mary was conceived without sin and that this is a formal dogma

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FBIS . . .

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of Roman Catholicism. He said: "... the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception ... was preserved free from all stain of original sin..." Pope Pius IX went on to warn that those who deny this dogma are "condemned by their own judgment" and have "made shipwreck as regards the faith" and have "fallen away from the unity of the Church." The present pope affirms this unscriptural and blasphemous doctrine, and thus we see the grave error of affiliating with the Roman Catholic Church and of praising Pope John Paul II, as many evangelical leaders have done. If this were Rome's only error, it would be enough to condemn it as a false "church" and to identify it as having a false gospel.

* * *

Catholic Seminary Shut Due To Porn Scandal. — A Catholic seminary in St. Poelten, Austria, has been shut down because of pornographic and homosexual activity. The case has been going on for many months. Some 40,000 photos, including child pornography, were found on a computer at the seminary. Some of the images, showing orgy scenes between priests and their instructors, were published in the Austrian

news magazine Profil. In announcing the temporary closure of the school, Catholic Bishop Klaus Kueng said that "active homophile relations had developed."

* * *

Grand Canyon University Grants Honorary Degree To Alice Cooper. — In May, the Grand Canyon University, which is affiliated with Southern Baptists in Arizona, granted shock rocker Alice Cooper a Ph.D. Cooper has made a profession of faith in Christ, but he continues to perform rock and roll concerts as Alice Cooper. His 1986 come-back concert, which occurred after his conversion, featured many vile things from earlier days, including snakes, chopped-up baby dolls, even his own staged execution by a guillotine. His shows continue to include some of the aforementioned things. His grown daughter dresses scantily like Britney Spears and participates in his rock shows. □ □

TARES . . .

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severe sickness. If mixed with wheat in bread it will cause dizziness.

Animals also suffer from this poisonous grass, and experience much distress from the irritation caused by the sharply-spiked grain. □

SIN . . .

(Continued from page 1)

power to determinate choice, hence liable to fall. The greater number of them stood the test. In 1 Timothy 5:21, those who stood the test are called the elect angels. But many fell from their state of innocence. See 2 Peter 2:4, and Jude 6: "The angels which kept not their first estate."

The leader and chief among them was Satan, who "abode not in the truth" (John 8:44), falling through pride (1 Timothy 3:6).

He was first called Lucifer, which means "son of the morning." He loses that name and takes the name Satan. This chief of the fallen angels has many Bible names. As expressive of his primacy and supremacy over other evil spirits he is called Beelzebub. As indicative of his hostility to man he is called Satan, which means adversary. As descriptive of his methods of malignity against man his name is Devil. In this word is the idea of one who sets at variance. Those whom he seeks to set at variance are God and man. When he approaches man he slanders God; when he approaches God he accuses man. Hence, in his work of variance he is both an accuser and a slanderer. When he approaches Eve he slanders God. When he approaches God he accuses Job. In view of the result of his work he is called

Apollyon, the destroyer. He is never a constructionist, but eminently a destructionist. He does not build; he demolishes. Because of the form he assumed in the temptation of man, he is called The Serpent, The Dragon. Very sinuous, tortuous, slimy, and subtle are his ways. On account of his rage and predatory character he is compared to A Roaring Lion. He is called The Tempter because he incites to evil. He is called The Deceiver because he tempts by lies. That he may deceive he comes as an angel of light, and that he may trap the unwary he sets cunning traps as a fowler who ensnares birds. But all the time he is a liar and a murderer, and the father of lies and murders.

He is the father of all false religions. He uses the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life, and the course of the world in turning men away from God. He first blinds, then binds and then stupefies, and so he keeps his goods in peace. He is an awful and hideous reality, apart from God the most stupendous factor in the universe.

He is limited in power and in the time allotted him to work his evil deeds.

Now comes a much more serious question. What was the occasion that led the devil to sin? God did not make a devil; he created him a good angel,

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It Doesn't Matter

By G. Smoker

"It doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you are sincere." That's what a plumbing salesman told me one day — and so many people have said the same thing that it is almost a proverb.

This popular saying puts a premium on sincerity, and sincerity is a rare thing in this age of sham. We all admire the man who is sincere and despise the hypocrite. We have great respect for the man who is so sincerely in earnest in his convictions that he is willing to die for them.

But sincerity is not enough.

Mr. Monroe sincerely believed that the railroad tracks were clear or he wouldn't have been caught on the tracks in his car, and hurled into eternity.

Mrs. Jones sincerely believed it was a dose of medicine she was taking from the medicine cabinet. It turned out to be poison and she died.

Joe Brady felt sincerely that he was doing the right thing to rid the community of the man he hated. But the court did not think so, and the electric chair awaited him.

Nor will sincerity save

your soul if you believe the wrong thing. In fact, it is far more deadly to believe the wrong thing than to drink poison.

The statement, "It doesn't matter what you believe," assumes that any faith is all right and will get you to heaven if you follow it sincerely. But that isn't so!

The heathen are in great earnest as they worship their images of wood and stone. The Hindu fakirs that go on long pilgrimages or lie for years on beds of spikes are utterly sincere — but they are lost. The Mohammedans stop work and drop on their knees wherever they may be and pray to Allah five times daily. Many of them are sincere too, but they are lost.

Not even all so-called Christians are saved. If you place your hope of salvation in a pope or in the intercessions of priests and departed saints, you are lost. If you rest your faith in religious ceremonies you are lost. If you think the pearly gates of heaven will swing open for you because you are a self-righteous moral man or because of

charities done to merit eternal life, you may be one hundred per cent sincere, but you will certainly be lost.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," said Christ.

It is the devil's lie that it makes no difference what you believe. It makes a world of difference — an eternity of difference — what you believe! A person can be saved only by coming as a needy, helpless sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ and accepting His pardon — a pardon made possible because Christ died on the cross the death we deserved to die. He alone can save us and keep us saved. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" cried the Apostle Peter.

It does matter what you believe. Anchor your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ with all the sincerity of your heart, and He will give you the peace with God and everlasting life.

SIN . . .

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but created him free to act, to stand or fall. Now, the devil sinned, and we find his sin to be pride or ambition, but we have not yet found the occasion for that sin. Now, the Bible does not say, but I am going to give you my own opinion, and you can take it as an opinion. My opinion is that, in one of those meetings in heaven like that described in Job at which all the angels at stated times come up into the presence of God, he announced to them that he was going to create this world and make man in his image and likeness, and that this man through obedience, if he observed the commandments of God and should eat of the tree of life, would become immortal and be lifted up above the angels, and that it should be the office of the angels to serve this man. Now I think there is where the devil protested. He was willing enough for God to be over him, but he was unwilling for a creature, made originally lower than himself, to have a destiny that would one day put any being above him. Every saved soul will be far above any angel. That is my opinion. If I had time I believe I could show you inferentially, of course not specifically, for I would then have to give you scriptures.

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Some "Ifs" Of the Christian Ministry

If you have put your trust in Christ alone,
And made His precious life your very own,
If you now put Him first in all your plans,
And stand for everything for which He stands,
If you have heard His call to preach His Word,
(The sweetest call that mortal ever heard),

If you have put your hand unto the plow,
And will not toward the world look backward now,
If you love God's people all the while,
And, for their sakes, go on the second mile,
If you can labor patiently all day,
And see no fruits to cheer you on your way,

If you can smile in Christian love divine,
When everything against you would combine,
If you can stand alone for God and right,
Depending simply, solely, on His might,
If you can face the world in hope and cheer,
When other men would falter, dread, or fear,

If you can preach the Word to sinful man,
And show him from the Book the Gospel plan,
If you can hold your course amidst confusion,
And never take for truth a mere illusion,
If you can live the truth just as you preach it,
And yet show how in justice it is founded,

If you can weep with those who are in sorrow,
And yet rejoice with others on the morrow,
If you can comfort hearts that grief has broken,
And heal a wound—by Scriptures aptly spoken,
If you can help the weaker ones that stumble,
And yet the haughty bigots you can humble,

If you can preach to self more than to others,
And never lord it o'er your Christian brothers,
If you, your flesh can keep in prone subjection,
And on the things above set your affection—
THEN your life's greatest service will have rendered,
And, furthermore, you'll be a Man
SURRENDERED!

Spurgeon Believed In Baptist Perpetuity

History has hitherto been written by our enemies, who never would have kept a single fact about us upon the record if they could have helped it, and yet it leaks out every now and then that certain poor people called Anabaptists were brought up for condemnation.

From the days of Henry II to those of Elizabeth we hear of certain unhappy heretics who were hated of all men for the truth's sake which was in them. We read of poor men and women, with their garments cut short, turned out into the fields to perish in the cold, and anon of others who were burnt at Newington for the crime of Anabaptism.

Long before your Protestants were known of, these horrible Anabaptists, as they were unjustly called, were protesting for the "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." No sooner did the visible church begin to depart from the gospel than these men arose to keep fast by the good old way. The priests and monks wished for peace and slumber, but there was always a Baptist or a Lollard tickling men's ears with holy Scriptures, and calling their attention to the errors of the times. They were a poor persecuted tribe. The halter was thought to be too good for

them. At times ill-written history would have us think that they died out, so well had the wolf done his work on the sheep. Yet here we are, blessed and multiplied; and Newington sees other scenes from Sunday to Sunday.

As I think of your numbers and efforts, I can only say in wonder — what a growth! As I think of the multitudes of our brethren in America, I may well say, What hath God wrought! Our history forbids discouragements." — (Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, pg. 41) □ □ □

SIN . . .

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The account of Genesis speaks of the serpent, the instrument, only. But fairly interpreted it implies what is elsewhere so forcibly taught, that the serpent was merely the instrument of a mighty spiritual power in the temptation of Eve. Just as the devil can take possession of a man and make him demoniac, so the devil took possession of the serpent. The use of the serpent as a means, and the most suitable means, arises out of his power and his cunning. □

Quit griping about your church; if it was perfect, you couldn't belong.

BODY . . .

(Continued from page 7)

bread, he shall live forever: yes, and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world ... My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed ... As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he shall also live because of me ... he that eateth this bread shall live

forever."

I have read to you these famous passages — God's revelation about salvation for a starving, dying world. May I ask you if you are neglecting your spirit and feeding only your flesh? Thousands are doing that — yes, millions — and what is the result? Civilization is drifting rapidly toward the precipice; the world is bankrupt,

financially, politically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually. Governments and legislators stand helpless and impotent. Hope almost perishes as trouble, stern and insistent, still knocks at our doors after years of ruinous, deadly war.

The shadow of overwhelming catastrophe creeps over the world and fear clutches at the heart. Statesmen, leaders, philosophers seem to have lost their way — traveling toward a blind alley with no way out. But you and I, as individuals, can be certain of life and peace and joy and heaven eternally, simply by taking Christ — The Bread of heaven. Will you do it now?" He is VERY WONDERFUL!

[Next month: Your Grinding Machine.] ■ ■

STATUS . . .

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close to losing its majority status. Similar findings have come from the Gallup Poll, the 1988-2002 National Election Studies (NES); and the 1990 and 2001 American Religious Identification Studies (ARIS). Frank Newport, editor in chief of the Gallup Poll, which tracks religious affiliation, said yesterday that in his group's survey, "the percentage who say they are Protestant is getting close to the 50 percent level. It was 51 percent in 2003." As recently as 1996 or 1997, the proportion of

Protestants was 58 percent, he said. "It's not that people are abandoning Christianity. They may just be abandoning the label Protestant," Mr. Newport added.

Figures from both Gallup and NORC indicate Roman Catholics make up about 25 percent of the total U.S. population, a statistic that has remained stable for decades, and that Jews constitute 2 percent. Asked why the percentage of Catholics has not risen, given all the immigrants that have come from Mexico and other Latin American countries, Mr. Newport said that Hispanics arrive in this country as Catholics, but do not always retain their Catholic roots. However, Roman Catholicism remains the nation's largest Christian faith, with more than 65.2 million members.

Unlike NORC, Mr. Newport says Gallup has found no evidence that the percentage of Americans with no religion is climbing. Gallup data indicate the share of those with no religion remains at 9 percent, where it was in 1992. But Mr. Smith of NORC said Gallup stands alone with its finding that the number of nonbelievers has remained flat and said he is convinced Gallup is wrong. Gallup does not include Mormons in its Protestant category. But its "other" religion category accounts for 13 percent of the total." ■

Don't Just Belong

If you think your church the best,
Tell 'em so!
If you'd have it lead the rest,
Help it grow!
When there's something to do,
Let them always count on you.
You'll feel good when it is through,
Don't you know?

If you're used to giving knocks,
Change your style;
Throw bouquets instead of rocks,
For awhile.
Let the other fellow roast,
Shun him as you would a ghost,
Meet his banter with a boast
And a smile.

When a stranger from afar
Comes along,
Tell him who and what you are—
Make it strong.
Never flatter, never bluff,
Tell the truth, for that's enough;
Be a booster, that's the stuff—
Don't just belong!

FOY . . .

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various faiths as they were in a religion that worked on the field of battle. This is the rankest kind of propaganda, having as its purpose to cause people to weigh values and standards by the word of man rather than the Word of God, appealing to the flesh rather than the inspired Word. It was simply a subtle way of presenting the cry of the modernist, "the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man" with one church and one faith, and this faith dictated by a group of liberals.

This was an attempt to tear down the faith of the individual believer, the sovereignty of the local church, and in its place build an ecclesiastical machine that would be able to out-Rome Rome in her control of religious thought, faith and practices. They would rob the blood of Christ of its efficacy, God of His rights as Creator, of His place as the one God, Christ of His deity, the Bible of its authenticity and divine origin, the churches of their sovereignty and the believer of his faith. We feel the time has arrived to pull the curtain from around these plans and find whether or not its purposes and teachings are in accord with God's Word, and in so doing answer the question, "Why Baptists cannot enter an ecumenical movement."

By opening our Bibles

we read the following: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. 1:13-14). Once again "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

Baptists accept the whole word of God as the statement of their faith, and could not join with or fellowship any man or group of men who would take from or add to the inspired Word of God. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19). Thus we could have no part nor parcel with those who would try to destroy God's Word either by addition or subtraction.

We not only believe that the Bible contains God's one and only plan of salvation, but we also believe that the Bible gives God's final and complete plan for His churches. And we bow to no catechism nor any other works of men. It is evident that for unity of the various faiths

to become a reality, someone would have to give up something, and Baptists would have to give up the entire Word of God, and in its place accept the interpretations of man. Let us see what the Bible teaches, what Baptists believe and if this one-church crowd can accept what Baptists believe and the Bible teaches!

First, we believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction, that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter. We also believe that the Bible was verbally inspired, that is to say, that men wrote the exact words as they were spoken by the Holy Spirit.

Now what saith the Word of God? "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21).

Now this is what the Bible teaches and what Baptists believe about God's Holy Word. It is absolutely infallible and is

to be accepted in its entirety. If you want to make a little test, ask one of these one-church theorists, if they can accept the above statement and Scriptures. Ask them if they believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God from Genesis to Revelation. Ask them if they believe the Genesis record of creation. Ask them if they believe the Bible to be all truth and free from error! You will probably get an answer something like this:

"Why, yes, the Bible is the expression of God's thoughts and inasmuch as men from various walks of life were used in writing it, they probably drew upon tradition and imagination, and therefore there may be much therein, which is not absolutely true, and God probably did not mean that the world was created in six literal days, for reason tells us this would have been impossible, but it was probably days of indeterminate length and we must apply reason to all things." When you hear a man so speak he does not believe what the Bible teaches, nor what Baptists believe in regard to God's Word and you should therefore shun him.

Believing as we do in regard to God's Word and that it is the true center of Christian union, and the standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions must be tried, we

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FOY . . .

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could not unite with any group nor fellowship with any who believe contrary to what God's Word teaches concerning the Bible.

We believe that in the divine Trinity there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, being equal in every divine perfection executing distinct but harmonious offices in the work of redemption. Thus the point we wish to emphasize here is the Deity of Christ. We believe that Christ existed before the incarnation, and more than that, we believe that He existed from all eternity, that He is Divine, that He is God the Son, and so teaches the Scriptures.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (1 Jn. 1:1), and "The same was in the beginning with God" (Jn. 1:2). Then "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14). Once again, "For I came down from heaven" (Jn. 6:38). "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). "And now O Father glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was"

(Jn. 17:5). "They shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Mt. 1:23).

Now is there any doubt as to the teaching of the Scriptures that Jesus existed from all eternity, that He is divine, that He and the Father are one? Baptists believe this because it is so taught in God's Word. Now ask your one-church friend, if he believes this, and in all probability he will answer that Jesus was the best man who ever lived, a great teacher, and that we should follow His teachings, but he will not let you hedge him into admitting the Deity of Christ, he will try to answer abstractly. These should be sufficient reasons alone as to why Baptists could not enter into an ecumenical movement, but for the sake of the record we shall present a few more.

Baptists believe that man was created in holiness, but by voluntary transgression fell, in consequence of which all mankind are sinners, not by constraint, but by choice, that man is void of any good in the eyes of God, and always is inclined toward evil, and is under condemnation. Now what saith the Scriptures? "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). Yet many of the one-church crowd set this aside and try to place the creation of man in a

scientific test tube and therefore the Darwinian theory of evolution, that man evolved from lower life to higher life is offered as the explanation of man's being. Darwin in his "Descent of Man" has this to say about man's origin:

"In the class of mammals the steps are not difficult to conceive, which led from the ancient monotremata to the ancient marsupials; and from these to the early progenitors of the placental mammals. We may thus ascend to the Lemuridae; and the interval is not very wide from these to the Simiadae. The Simiadae then branched off into two great stems, the new world and the old world monkeys; and from the latter at a remote period, man, the wonder and the glory of the universe, proceeded."

What a difference in this and God's record, "So God created man in his own image." Are we to assume that God was a monkey, we must according to this theory either assume that, or that the Word of God is false concerning creation. This is placing man's theory against God's Word.

Now shall we accept man's theory or God's record? We shall accept God's Word and this is just another reason that Baptists cannot join a group who will not accept God's Word regarding the creation of man.

The third chapter of

Genesis records the fall of man. Romans 5:19 tells us "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" and Psalms says: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5). "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Yet our modernist, of which a large part of the one-church crowd is composed, tells us there is no such thing as sin, judgment and hell. And that all men need is to be lifted up to a higher level, unite with the church and reform. In this they overlook the total depravity of man, and the necessity of the new birth.

Baptists believe that all men are totally depraved, that there are none righteous, there is no difference for all have sinned, and that salvation is wholly by grace through faith in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily took upon Himself our nature yet without sin, and through His death made a full atonement for our sins, that it was the Just dying for the unjust that He might bring us to God. Thus His death was substitutionary, efficacious, and complete in reconciling the difference between a Holy God and sinful men.

Now what saith the Scriptures? "For by grace are ye saved through faith;

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FOY . . .

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and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16). "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man" (Phil. 2:6-7). "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5). "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25).

Ask your one-church friend if he can accept these passages from God's Word without any changes, just as they are written. He cannot and will not for they do not fit in with his one church theory, and his social gospel.

Then what about the literal resurrection and ascension of Christ. Baptists believe that Christ arose from the dead according to the Scriptures and ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He ever liveth. "And the angel answered and said

unto the woman, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified; he is not here; for he is risen as he said; Come and see the place where the Lord lay" (Mt. 28:5-6). "But now is Christ risen and become the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forever more" (Rev. 1:18). "And when he had spoken these things while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). The modernist will tell you that both the resurrection and the ascension are a myth and impossibility, as they are against the laws of nature and gravity. Now does it not stand to reason that he who does not believe these things is apostate, that his preaching and his faith is in vain? "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. 15:14). Can we unite with, or fellowship a group who does not believe in the resurrection and ascension of Christ? Yea, shall we even call them brethren?

Then what about the doctrine of repentance. Would Baptists have to give this up to unite with the one-church crowd? The best place to go as always for the answer is the Word of God, and then measure this one-church crowd by the infallible Word of God, in regard to repentance.

Baptists not only believe in repentance, but that it is absolutely necessary to salvation, and without it there can be no salvation. John the Baptist preached "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 3:2). It was the message of the twelve, "And they went out and preached that men should repent?" (Mk. 6:12). Paul preached this doctrine, and counted it an essential to salvation. "The times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Jesus forever settles this question. "But except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3). But this crowd teaching that men are not sinners by nature, must also deny the doctrine of repentance for they affirm there is nothing to repent from. That all that is needed is a change of habits, environment and culture, which is merely reformation. This, of course, denies the need of the new birth or regeneration, and is just another reason why Baptists can have no part in this one church movement, for in every particular it substitutes man's reasoning for God's Word.

Now, next may we consider the two ordinances of the church, namely: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptists believe that Baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, into the name of the

Father and Son and Holy Ghost, setting forth in a beautiful symbol our faith in the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and that we have passed from death unto life and are a new creature in Christ Jesus. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See here is water; What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayst, and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away and the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing."

Here Philip in answer to the question of the eunuch, "What doth hinder me to be baptized" answered: "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." Thus Philip believed the same thing Baptists believe today, that only a believer can be baptized, and he used the same mode that Baptists use today, immersion in water.

Now many of the one-church crowd do not immerse, still others do not

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FOY . . .

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make salvation a prerequisite to baptism. Baptists would have to give this up and baptize infants, the unsaved and any who presented themselves for baptism. Have we the authority to lay aside God's Word on baptism, and accept man's method?

The Lord's Supper is to be engaged in only by born again believers who have been scripturally baptized and who are members of the church. But this crowd would throw the doors open to any who cared to partake. And they do this with their world communion Sundays, where those who do not believe that Jesus is the Christ, partake of that which is to set forth His person and work until He comes again. Have we the right to invite guests to His table whom He did not invite? This is what we would have to do should we fellowship this crowd.

Then, last, about the doctrine of the church. Baptists believe that a church is a local body of baptized believers, associated together in one place to carry out the commands of Christ, observing the ordinances, governed by His laws, and that its only scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. We also believe that the word church as used in the New Testament refers to a local sovereign assembly, and not to a world organization

under a man-made head. Throughout the New Testament, it is the church which was at Jerusalem, the churches of Galatia, the church of Corinth, etc. These were all local, independent bodies, subject to no central power, answerable to no one but the Lord, conducting their work according to the New Testament code. And nowhere in the Scriptures do you find any precedent for a world church nor even a national church, nor even a group of churches being governed by an ecclesiastical or governmental organization. So we affirm that all who practice or would practice such things are not true churches and therefore Baptists can have no part in anything that is not supported by the Word of God. This one-church movement would write their own code, prescribe their own methods, form their own organization and destroy autonomy of the local church.

This so-called church is aptly described in Revelation 3:14-22: Neither cold nor hot, rich and increased in goods, having need of nothing, where Christ stands on the outside of the door. Therefore any place where Christ has been locked out, could not be a church, but rather would be a stronghold of Satan. So we can only say that according to the Word of God, such an organization is Satan inspired, and Baptists can have no part with it. For to

do so would mean that we must cast aside the Word of God, forsake our faith, renounce the leadership of the spirit, and preach another gospel which is no gospel at all.

Those who would promote this scheme are easily recognized by any who know God's Word. They are filthy dreamers, defiling the flesh, despising dominion, speaking evil of dignities. Speaking evil of those things which they know not; but what they know naturally as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves, clouds without water, carried about of winds, trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead; plucked up by the roots, raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

These men will be smooth-tongued, expert backslappers, with a winning personality, prating much about the Fatherhood

of God, and the brotherhood of man, speaking much about friendship and world fellowship, knowing more of philosophy than the gospel, great civil leaders and club joiners, smiling on sin and saying that we must understand and be tolerant of the weakness in others, and that through proper leadership, precept and example men can be led from evil to right.

To their side they will draw a great host of people who wish to belong to a church, but yet live as they always lived. This is strictly a religion of the flesh, sponsored by Satan, spawned in hell, designed to appease the flesh. From all such turn away, and measure them and their teachings by the Word of God, shun them as a thing of evil, and have the courage to denounce them in high and low places. Let all true Baptists take their positions, for the line of battle is drawn. It is Christ or no Christ. Choose ye this day where you will stand!

The best
mathematical
equation I have
ever seen:
1 cross + 3 nails
= 4 given